

Chatham Township Environmental Commission Meeting
Minutes

Wednesday June 5, 2024 7:15 pm
58 Meyersville Rd., Chatham NJ 07928

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT: The meeting schedule for 2024 and January 2025 is posted on the main bulletin board at the Township municipal building, in two newspapers and on the Chatham Township Environmental Commission website at <https://www.chathamtownship-nj.gov/environmental>. The public is cordially invited to attend all meetings, join the discussions and participate in projects.

CTEC'S PURPOSE: To undertake projects and make recommendations concerning the protection or use of natural resources, including water resources and air quality, located within or directly affecting Chatham Township. The Chatham Township Environmental Commission's goal is to provide a responsible environmental viewpoint to Township committees and boards and to undertake projects with a strong educational component in order to inform officials and residents about constructive actions that can be taken to preserve the environment.

APPROVED DATES FOR CTEC AND GREEN TEAM FOR 2024 AND JANUARY 2025

The first Wednesday of every month except second Wednesday in January, April and July 2024; January 10, February 7, March 6, April 10, May 1, June 5, July, August NO MEETING, September 4, October 2, November 13, December 6 2024 and January 8, 2025.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Roll Call: CTEC Members at 7:15pm-Present: Jessica Romeo-presiding, Jim Connelly (Open Space Liaison), Marty McHugh (Township Committee liaison), Amy Mason, Lisa McHugh, Pat Wells (alternate 1), John von Knorring (alternate 2); Absent: Cara Pacifico-Feeser, Celeste Fondaco, Dan Miller (Planning Board)

2. Public Meeting Statement and CTEC's Purpose (see above)

3. Approve Meeting Minutes of May 1, 2024:

Motion to approve the minutes of May 1, 2024

Jim motioned to approve the Minutes; John seconded. All in favor.

4. Green Team updates

Activities that CTEC manages are all part of the Green Team: clean ups, gardens, plant sales and tree seedling giveaways, educational webinars/meetings, etc. Silver Certification received October 2021. We are up for recertification in 2024. After conversations with Township Committee members and Township Administration, it was agreed the current goal is a Bronze certification because of limited resources in completing the lengthy application. Application dates to focus on are May 10th and July 31st. 2024 Sustainable Jersey (SJ) Team members/subcommittee: Jessica Romeo and alternate commissioners Pat Wells. 220 Points were submitted on Feb. 24, 2024 application deadline. Progress is being tracked on an excel document 'CTEC Sustainable Jersey 2024 Tracker'.

5. Native Plant Ordinance

The ordinance is on the Township Committee Agenda for 6/25/2024.

6. Chatham Township Tree permitting process and tree replacement discussion.

The EC discussed the idea of a Tree Bank being used in some towns. Discussed reaching out to Madison about their program. Currently there is no mechanism for follow up to ensure proper tree replacement. Draft document to be created.

7. Adopt-a-Drain program

Adopt-a-Drain is a not-for-profit organization that helps towns introduce this program to their residence. They provide maps of where the drains are located, a welcome packet and a report back to the DPW providing a metric to track progress: # of drains adopted, # of participants and amounts of debris collected. The program has been launched. Residents can sign up at <https://nj.adopt-a-drain.org>. CTEC agreed there is a need to engage the community and encourage participation. Information will be included at future events such as Fishawack and any fair or festival CTEC attends. Information will also be sent to the Courier. Jessica will ask Christie at the DPW for an update on sign ups.

8. Fishawack Festival

The commission confirmed their interest in attending. Pat will be setting up with information about Mosquito Dunks, Adopt-a-Drain, a simple craft, and overall awareness of all that CTEC does in the community.

9. Shunpike Restoration Project

CTEC has received the ANJEC Open Space grant of \$1,500, and a Jaycees signage grant of \$500.

10. NRI Update

(Subcommittee Lisa, John, Jessica). TBD but in theory, CTEC to make suggested updates to each section identified as needing updates and share with Township engineer for advice and input as appropriate. Must consult the Planning Board who needs to include the NRI in the 2027 Master Plan.

11. Pollinator Pathway Project for Municipalities

Amy will investigate what is involved. Discussion expanded to include the widespread use of Mosquito Sprays on yards and the role of the Morris County Mosquito Commission. The question was also raised as to whether the Township continues to use organic turf products.

12. 2024 events (running list)

- EV Expo with Madison and Chatham Borough 11am-4pm– (4/27/24) (John)
- Spring yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, Great Swamp Watershed Association - 5/4/24 (Jessica) Over 85 participants.
- Plant sale & distribution with the Great Swamp Watershed Association on 5/4/32 at 10:30am at Colony Pool in combination with the following seminars: (Jessica, Pat, Celeste)
 - *Creating a Woodland Garden with Indigenous Plants & Vertical Structure – (1/18/24)
 - *Plug in To Native Groundcovers (2/15/24)

*Pollinator Conservation: Creating and Protecting Habitat for NJ’s Bees, Butterflies, and Biodiversity (3/13/24)

*Plants for Pollinators: Plant Sale Overview and Kick off with Hazel England GSWA (4/1/24)

-Celebration of Native Plants w/ the Library of the Chatham – May 2024 (Jessica)

Jessica authored an ordinance regarding native plants on Municipal properties. See above.

-Speaker event at the Library of the Chathams “Fight Invasives, Go Natives” Speaker Master Gardener Ilona Ontscherenki- 5/6/24 at 7pm. Determine an additional educational seminar (Celeste)

-Fishawack – (6/8/24) (Celeste, Jim, Pat) See above.

-Tree seedling giveaway- 100 trees from Arbor Day Foundation -Possible dates include Fall Sustainability Fair or Township Fall Festival (Cara, Jim, Lisa)

-Fall Sustainability fair – (9/21/24, 8am-1pm) (John, Pat)

-Fall cleanup event – Nash over to the Fenske property- DATE TBC- (Jim, Lisa)

-Trail work day- DATE TBC (June 1st

- National Trail Day)

-Shunpike Restoration - DATE TBC – (Jim, Lisa, Pat)

-Fall yard sale with Madison, Chatham Borough, Great Swamp Watershed Association (10/18/24) (Jessica)

13. Reports:

a. Township Committee – Marty McHugh- No report

b. Planning Board – Dan Miller – No report

c. Open Space – Jim Connelly- No report

d. Education and Outreach – Jessica Romeo

e. Invasive Species – No Report

f. Social media –if post worthy, send to Jessica

g. Website – Jessica/Jim/ All agreed a process for updating is necessary.

h. Pollinator / Native Gardens – Jessica/Pat –see Shunpike Restoration Project above

i. Grants- Jim Connelly- grants pending

14. Possible New project 2024

Updating the Conservation Easement Inventory / map which was created in 1999. The last update to the map was done in 2020. This is part of the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) which can be found on the Township website.

15. Informational Articles

(Subcommittee Jessica, Pat, Lisa) Articles will be written to be informational. “Leaf Blowing” in March; “Anti-Idling” in April; “Native plants in landscaping” proposed for May.

16. Next meeting: Wednesday, June 5th at 7:15pm

Location: The Senior Center. Parking and entrance from lower lot.

17. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Jim motioned to adjourn at 8:45pm; Amy seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Mason